



NewsLetter October-December 2005 Issue no. 9

Report on IGI's 2005 Conference 'Breaking Ground'

The IGI Annual Conference 'Breaking Ground' was held on November 11th 2005 at Dublin Castle. This highly successful conference was attended by more than 100 delegates. The conference proceedings were organised into four major topical sessions on Waste Infrastructure, Energy Infrastructure, Transport and Natural Resources and Future Challenges. Sixteen presentations were given by speakers from Ireland and overseas, representing a wide cross-section of members interests. Topics included Contaminated land, Landfill sites, the provision of Wind and Geothermal energy, the geological aspects of major transport projects such as the Luas, the M4 and the Dublin Port Tunnel and the provision of aggregate supplies and underground storage facilities. Most of the presentations are available on the IGI website (see <http://www.igi.ie/pages/BreakingGround.shtml>) or follow the link from the IGI homepage on www.igi.ie

Employment and Industry Survey

The IGI has recently completed its Geology Employment and Industry Survey. This survey of the geology community in Ireland had two constituent parts:

- A survey of Geology-related companies to discover how, on the employer side, they found the recruitment process for geologists and;

- A survey of Geology Graduates from the last five years to discover on the employee side how graduates found the job-seeking process.

The Industry Survey was carried out in 2004, and was conducted in two stages.

Firstly, a geology industry database was compiled; this chronicles points-of-contact details for over 550 companies involved in the geology sector in Ireland, and includes those involved in peat; coal; ores and heavy metal; plutonic rocks; sandstone and quartzite; marble and travertine; calcareous stone; volcanic rocks; slate; gravel, sand and earth; gypsum; clays and alumina; salt; minerals; geological, geotechnical, geochemical and oilfield engineering consultants; offshore and coastal engineering consultants; environmental, anti-pollution and public health consultants; soil exploration and analysis; transportation and traffic engineering consultants; civil, structural, hydroelectric and mining engineering consultants; and land surveyors. This database is now housed in the IGI Office at UCD.

Following this, survey questionnaires were sent out to the Managing Directors of the 120 most geologically-related of these companies. Completed replies were had from 32 of the companies, and four companies replied saying that there were no geologists working with them, a response rate of 33.3% in all.

The *Graduate Survey* was also completed in 2004. The first stage of this involved liaison with University Geology Departments, in order to find out what records they held of their graduates. As differing systems were used in each of the Universities in recording their students, it was decided to survey graduates with questionnaires from the last five years only, and to survey numbers only from times previous to this. Survey questionnaires were therefore sent out to graduates who have graduated over the last five years (1999-2003) from each of the four major Irish Universities which have Geology as a final year subject (UCG, UCD, UCC and TCD). Completed replies were had from 24 of the graduates, a low response rate of only around 8%, but not unusual for this type of survey.

On this graduate side of the survey the idea was to find out how graduates found getting posts in geology, how they perceived their 'readiness' for posts, and what the IGI can do for them in the future. The questionnaires asked graduates to answer a number of questions about their qualifications, their previous job history in both geology and non-geology sectors,

current employment conditions and pay scales, and how they saw the role of the IGI in Irish geology.

Important findings included:

- that many graduates completed postgraduate degrees in 'related' disciplines, such as GIS, IT, engineering and environment following graduation;
- that most did *research* Masters in 'pure' Geology;
- that the courses graduates would most like to have provided at University, but which were not available to them, are GIS/Computers, Engineering Geology, Soil Mechanics, Geotechnics, Management and Site Investigation;
- that they would like the IGI to increase graduates awareness of jobs before and during their final year at University,
- graduates would like the IGI to offer more courses and seminars, and to consult with Universities to advise subject areas to aid job opportunities, especially with respect to MSc. degrees

With this in mind, the IGI began a *consultation* process with University Departments and consulted in autumn/winter 2004 with the Heads of the Geology Departments of the four main universities. Following this, consultations were also had with the GSI, GSNI and EPA, in order to try to gain support for a drive to procure funding for an Irish-run 'taught' geology Masters specialising in applied geology, and possibly in particular in geotechnics/site investigation, or to provide grants to Irish graduates to travel abroad to study these courses.

An interesting by-product of the survey was the realisation that there have been almost 1,200 geology graduates from Irish Universities in the last forty years. Given that we at IGI estimate that there are 300 actively working geologists in Ireland, there seem to be several hundred that have emigrated or left geology.

EurGeol. Dr. Robert Meehan, PGeo.

Details of the survey results are available to download from the IGI website (www.igi.ie).

Upcoming IGI Courses

A one day IGI course on **Groundwater Recharge** will be given by Dr. Bridget Scanlon at the GSI Lecture Theatre on **Thursday January 19th 2006** (9.30 am - 5.30 pm, registration at 9.00 am). Also taking part will be Dr Bruce Misstear of the Department of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering, Trinity College Dublin. The cost of the course will be €150 for non-members (€100 for IGI members and for members of IGI's sponsoring bodies).

The IGI are currently organising a '**Safe Pass**' course. Details will be posted on the IGI website shortly. The IGI Board welcomes suggestions for courses from the membership.

Public Information Pamphlets

The IGI intends to produce a series of Public Information Pamphlets to help promote Geology as a subject to the general public. The pamphlets will be distributed to ENFO, the GSI and GSNI, public libraries, 2nd level geography teachers and educational institutions. EurGeol Kevin Cullen has kindly produced the first such pamphlet on the Geology of Irish Mineral Waters (see below). Copies can be obtained free of charge from the IGI Office.



Geology & Irish Bottled Waters

Natural Mineral & Spring Waters are clearly distinguished from ordinary drinking waters by their origin, original state and in some cases by their mineral content and trace elements.



News of Members

EurGeol Dr Matthew Parkes has moved from the IGH Programme in the Geological Survey of Ireland to the Natural History Museum in Dublin, as Assistant Keeper for Earth Science. He will be based in Beggars Bush, but all mail should be addressed to

Matthew Parkes
Natural History Division,
National Museum of Ireland,
Merrion Street,
Dublin 2,
IRELAND

Matthew's new email address is mparkes@museum.ie

Congratulations

Karen Lee Ibbottson, Laz Fleming and Thomas Vainio-Mattila were approved as PGeOs at the meeting of the IGI Board on January 10th 2006. The IGI Board also wish to congratulate Fiona McEvoy and Kevin Cleary on their recent election as EurGeols.

Adrian Black Honoured

Adrian Black worked at Tara Mines in the 1980s and was the 1987 IAEG President. Adrian emigrated to Australia and is now the Exploration Manager with NEWEXCO, Perth, Western Australia. Recently Adrian was the recipient of the Explorers Award at the Excellence in Exploration and Mining Conference held in Sydney.

Upcoming IAH Meeting

Tuesday 7th February 2006: The David Bourdon Memorial Lecture on **"Quality matters too: managing, monitoring and protecting groundwater quality in developing countries"** will be given by John Chilton, British Geological Survey.

Details of IAH lectures can be found on its website at (<http://www.iah-ireland.org/info/irish-group.htm>).

Irish Geological Research Meeting

Friday February 24th to Sunday 26th 2006: The 49th Annual Irish Geological Research Meeting (IGRM) will be hosted by University College Cork. The meeting will take place in the Brookfield Health Science Complex, University College Cork. The guest speakers will be Dr Mike Searle (University of Oxford) and Professor Bill McGuire (Benfield Hazard Research Centre, UCL). Abstracts for contributions (talks and posters) are invited and the deadline for their receipt is Monday 30th January at 5pm. Contributions must be in the broad area of Earth Sciences and must have an Irish connection (i.e. about an Irish Earth Science/Geology topic or must have been carried out at an Irish Institution). Abstracts (not exceeding 200 words) should be sent electronically as an MSWord attachment/rich text format (.rtf) to Dr John Reavy (j.reavy@ucc.ie). Detailed guidelines for abstract preparation will be posted shortly on the UCC Geology Department website.